Summer is here and waters are sparkling. That means it’s a perfect time to think about boating, swimming, clambakes, and shellfishing.

Shellfish have been part of our culture and tradition historically; they symbolize our connection to the estuaries and the sea. Did you know that the Eastern Oyster is our state shellfish?

Is there a New Englander who doesn’t recognize clams, oysters, scallops and mussels? —not in my acquaintance. In fact, many of us foodies treasure a special recipe for chowder that may have been passed down through the family. In mine, the bivalve gourmet delights are my husband’s clam chowder made with red potatoes (they don’t get mushy) and Great-Auntie Mamie’s oyster stuffing in the fall. I’m sure you have your own.

Fewer of us, perhaps, have thought about the opportunities for recreational harvesting in coastal towns, the people who are the lifeblood of commercial businesses, or the volunteers and managers who help keep these living resources thriving.

Whatever your particular interest in shellfish may be, we all have a stake in the future of these living resources. Thus, my colleagues and I here at Sea Grant have decided to devote this issue to the Connecticut Shellfish Initiative, an effort underway to plan for the future of shellfish and shellfishing in our state. You are invited to contribute your ideas.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as the gentleman on our cover enjoyed digging clams!

Peg Van Patten

Peg Van Patten, editor

About our cover:
Matt Radulski is delighted to be digging clams at a community event in Branford in 2012. Photographer Peter Otis (http://www.peterotisphotos.com) captured the moment.